

Message Text

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21

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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN STORTING RECESSES FOR SUMMER

REF: (A) OSLO 2015 (B) OSLO 1742 (C) OSLO A-76

SUMMARY. THE NORWEGIAN STORTING HAS RECESSED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, THUS MAKING A GOVERNMENT CRISIS UNLIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE STORTING EMPOWERED THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT ARBITRATION RESULTS IN THE FARM INCOME AND NURSES' SALARY DISPUTES, NEARLY THE ONLY UNRESOLVED PARTS OF THE SPRING NATIONAL WAGE-PRICE-INCOME NEGOTIATIONS. THE CLOSING SESSION WAS MARKED BY HARSH DEBATE BETWEEN LAB OR AND THE FAR LEFT, INDICATING TO MANY THAT THE LATTER HAS MOVED INTO OPPOSITION, PERHAPS ELIMINATING THE GOVERNMENT'S INFORMAL PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE OF THE CENTER PARTIES, CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S, HINTED THAT IT MIGHT COOPERATE WITH LABOR TO FORM A NEW INFORMAL CENTRIST

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MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON SATURDAY, JUNE 15, THE NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENT (STORTING) RECESSED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, WHEN IT WILL BE FORMALLY DISSOLVED JUST BEFORE THE 1974-75 STORTING IS OPENED IN EARLY OCTOBER.

BEFORE RECESSING, THE STORTING EMPOWERED THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT AND IMPLEMENT PROVISIONALLY THE RESULTS OF ARBITRATION IN TWO DISPUTES REMAINING UNRESOLVED FROM THE SPRING WAGE-PRICE-INCOME NEGOTIATIONS (REFS). THE 1973-74 STORTING WOULD THEN GRANT FINAL APPROVAL WHEN IT RECONVENES ON SEPTEMBER 30. ONLY IF ONE OF THE PARTIES WERE TO REJECT THE RESULTS WOULD THE STORTING NEED TO RECONVENE BEFORE THEN. THE TWO DISPUTES TO BE ARBITRATED ARE IN PRICE-SUBSIDY-INCOME NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN FARMER ORGANIZATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT AND IN SALARY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE NURSES ORGANIZATION AND MUNICIPAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS. THE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE UNION HAS ALSO ASKED THAT ITS NEGOTIATIONS BE REOPENED IN CASE THE NURSES SETTLEMENT IS TOO HIGH IN RELATION TO THE AGREEMENT WITH THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION. ANOTHER TROUBLESOME UNRESOLVED DISPUTE IS A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS' DEMAND FOR FASTER HIGH-SENIORITY GRADE AND PAY UPGRADING FOR ENGINEERS WITH HIGH SENIORITY THAN WAS AGREED UPON IN THE ALREADY SIGNED AND RATIFIED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AGREEMENT;

2. THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE STORTING WAS MARKED BY RELATIVELY AGGRESSIVE DEBATE BETWEEN LABOR AND CONSERVATIVES, AS EXPECTED, BUT ALSO BETWEEN LABOR AND THE FAR LEFT SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LEAGUE(SV), WHICH HAS GIVEN THE MINORITY BRATTELI GOVERNMENT THE VOTES NEEDED TO PASS MANY, PROBABLY MOST, OF ITS BILLS. SEVERAL STORTINGSMEN AND PRESS COMMENTATORS CONCLUDED THAT SV IS NOW CLARLY IN THE OPPOSITION, AND REIDAR LARSEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF SV, PREDICTED THAT THE MINORITY LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL NOT LAST UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTIONS IN 1977. IN CONTRAST TO THE HOSTILE TONE ADOPTED BY SV, CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY CHAIRMAN (AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER) LARS KORVALD MADE A VERBAL GESTURE IN THE DIRECTION OF COOPERATION WITH THE LABOR PARTY REMINISCENT OF HIS STATEMENTS AFTER LAST YEAR'S ELECTION.

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THIS WAS ALSO IN NOTABLE CONTRAST TO HIS PARTY'S COOLNESS TOWARD LABOR AND FLIRTATION WITH THE CONSERVATIVES DURING MOST OF THE SPRING SESSION.

3. COMMENT. A SPECIAL SESSION IN THE SUMMER AND A GOVERNMENT CRISIS ARE CONCEIVABLE, AS A RESULT OF EITHER A REFUSAL OF ONE OF THE PARTIES TO ACCEPT THE ARBITRAL AWARD, OR SOME NEW AND UNFORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. REIDAR LARSEN'S THREAT,

HOWEVER, IS REMINISCENT OF PAST SV REMINDERS THAT IT WILL NOT REMIAN A COMPLACENT HOSTAGE TO THE LABOR PARTY, AND PROBABLY SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION THAT SV HAS ALREADY REACHED A DECISION TO VOTE WITH THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES TO OUST THE BRATTELI GOVERNMENT WHEN THE STORTING RECONVENES IN THE FALL, OR DURING AN UNLIKELY SUMMER SPECIAL SESSION. OUR BEST JUDGEMENT, THEREFORE, IS THAT THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE THREATS ON THE HORIZON TO THE CONTINUATION IN OFFICE OF THE MINORITY LABOR GOVERNMENT.

BYRNE

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